

Remembering Names: 9 Tips For Doing It

1. Repeat the first name or confirm the last name.

Simply saying, "It's nice to meet you, Chuck" or "and your last name was...?" will help you register the name and give it a better chance to implant itself into your memory.

2. Ask a question or make a comment about the person's name.

"Nice to meet you, Julia. My college roommate's name was Julia, so I'll have no problem remembering you."

3. Ask the person to spell his or her name.

"Abby, do you spell your name with a 'y' or with an 'ie'?"

4. Associate the name with a picture in your mind.

If you meet a CEO named Arthur, visualize him as King Arthur with the knights of the Round Table. "Some people like this technique; others say it confuses them," warn Barber and Waymon. "Only use it if it's helpful."

5. Ask how the person got his name.

"Savannah, were you named after the city?"

6. Tell the person what you have heard about him.

"I heard you organized this whole event, Peter."

7. Keep your energy level high.

Let your body language and tone of voice signal that you are honestly trying to learn the other person's name and teach her yours. According to Barber and Waymon, people say this is flattering.

8. Always say the person's name again as you leave her.

"It was good to meet you, Jen."

9. Handle forgotten names with grace.

No, whining about how bad you are with names is not graceful. Instead, ask a friend to remind you, or if you can recall where you met that person, say "I remember meeting you at the conference in Seattle. I'm Sarah Ansari. Will you tell me your name again?" The person may have forgotten your name too, and will be grateful for your reintroduction.

Always remember: making small talk about a person's name may take time, but it could save you embarrassment later on!